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Duke Press Publication Charges Use Of 'Smear Tactics' By Left

By RUSSELL CLAY

The leftist radicals in America are using the same smear tactics as the rightist radicals of the McCarthy Era, a St. Louis historian charges in a Duke University Press literary publication.

Prof. James Hitchcock of St. Louis University, writing in the spring issue of the "South Atlantic Quarterly," points out parallels between today and the political climate generated in the early 1950s by the frenzied anti-Communist crusade of the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

"The term 'racist' is being used as loosely and as murderously as the term 'Red' once was," Hitchcock contends.

McCarthy placed persons "in the untenable position of having to prove that they were not Communists," he said. "On the more advanced campuses of today, and even some not so advanced, a similar atmosphere

seems to have developed, in which charges of 'racism,' 'CIA dupe,' 'reactionary,' are hurled with such indiscriminate abandon that professors and administrators find themselves on the defensive against charges that have never been specified or documented.

"The familiar technique of the Big Lie is employed, by which an assertion, if repeated often and vigorously enough, will be believed by a substantial number of people," said Hitchcock, an associate professor of history.

"At Columbia the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) accuses President Andrew Cordier of complicity in the murder of Patrice Lumumba, although no proof is offered. While insisting on free speech for themselves (vowing, like Senator McCarthy, never to be muzzled), the radicals tend to inhibit free and candid speech in the university, since professors' published writings,

and sometimes their private correspondence as well, are combed for statements which indicate ideological deviations, and these deviations are publicized and become the basis for denunciations of the university and demands for radical change. . . ."

The McCarthyites and the New Left extremists "both consider themselves saving remnants of the nation, authorized to pass absolute and unquestionable moral judgments on their fellow citizens and justified in taking whatever actions are necessary to resist evil and enforce virtue, even, in extreme cases, guerrilla warfare," Hitchcock said.

Hitchcock's article entitled "The McCarthyism of the Left," said the Catholic magazine "Commonweal" printed a charge that the Central Intelligence Agency murdered a black astronaut and that a CIA plot, "computerized from Washington," was responsible for the death of Malcolm X and other black leaders.

"The (Commonweal) does not endorse this charge, but an associate editor gives the clear impression he would like to believe it," Hitchcock said. "It is one of the agonies of a time like this, and a time like McCarthy's, that one cannot entirely dismiss such conspiracies as impossible; there could have been a Communist cadre in the State Department in 1952, there could be a CIA conspiracy against blacks now.

"But it is the essence of a principled liberalism not to join in rank hysteria, but to demand proof for all charges, however sincere the accusers seem to be. Above all, it is the liberal's duty, and the true radical's as well, not to mistake character assassination and frenetic hatreds for real political action."